

**NATIONAL AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH, EXTENSION,
EDUCATION, AND ECONOMICS ADVISORY BOARD**

MINUTES OF THE 2013 SPRING BOARD MEETING

**The Liaison Capitol Hill Hotel
415 New Jersey Avenue NW, Washington, DC
May 28-30, 2013**

CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	2
 TUESDAY, MAY 28	
ADVISORY BOARD GENERAL SESSION	3
Introduction and Remarks from the Under Secretary for REE.....	3
Welcome and Introductions	3
FOCUS SESSION – THE ROLE OF THE BOARD VIS-À-VIS THE EXECUTIVE AND LEGISLATIVE BRANCHES OF GOVERNMENT.....	3
Remarks from the USDA Office of General Counsel	3
FOCUS SESSION – ETHICS AND PROCEDURES OF THE BOARD	4
Remarks from the USDA Office of Ethics	4
Board Discussion	4
 WEDNESDAY, MAY 29	
ADVISORY BOARD GENERAL SESSION	5
Board Business.....	5
FOCUS SESSION – REE MISSION AREA UPDATES	5
Remarks from the Under Secretary for REE	5
Updates From the REE Mission Area Agencies: NASS, ERS, NIFA, ARS, NAL.....	7
Board Discussion	9
FOCUS SESSION – INTERNATIONAL PROGRAMS WITH RELEVANCY TO THE REE MISSION AREA.....	9
REE Agency International Programs Presentations	9
Board Discussion	10
Board Business.....	10
 THURSDAY, MAY 30	
ADVISORY BOARD GENERAL SESSION	10
Board Business.....	10
Committee Reports	11
Board Discussion	12
Public Comment.....	13
 RESOLUTIONS.....	 13
ACTION ITEMS.....	14

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The National Agricultural Research, Extension, Education, and Economics (NAREEE) Advisory Board (“the Board”) met in public session on May 28-30, 2013 at the Liaison Capitol Hill Hotel in Washington, DC. This was the first meeting of the Board in Fiscal Year 2013 due to the cancellation of the October meeting. The October meeting was cancelled due to the lapse in the Farm Bill, which caused the Board to lose its legislative authority.

This meeting welcomed new members and provided an orientation to new and returning members of the NAREEE Board. The Board nominated and elected an Executive Committee as well as chairs to the Board. There was extensive discussion on the General Operating Procedures of the Board and the unique relationship of the Board to the Executive and Legislative Branch as well as the Land Grant Colleges and Universities. The Office of the General Counsel and the Office of Ethics provided guidance to the Board on their activities and reminded the Board members that they are not permitted to lobby members of Congress on behalf of the Board.

Board members outlined a process for identifying and prioritizing topics of review. The Board agreed that all members would provide topics to the Executive Committee and the list would be reviewed on a bi-annual basis. The topics would then be discussed at Board meetings. The Board also agreed to utilize the Chatham House Rules in developing reports and recommendations.

The Board was tasked by the Under Secretary of the REE Mission Area to review and compare two sets of strategic goals for the mission area: from the President’s Council of Advisors for Science and Technology (PCAST) and from the REE Action Plan for USDA Science. The Under Secretary asked specifically for recommendations on 1) how to establish the six proposed research institutes; 2) how (and where) to establish the proposed scientific advisory committee and 3) to evaluate the balance of public investment in major and minor crops. The Board agreed to address these three topics. In addition, the Board agreed by unanimous voice vote to form a scientific advisory panel as a committee of the NAREEE Advisory Board.

The REE Mission Area Agencies provided updates to the Board. And the Board held a listening session specifically on international programs with relevancy to the REE Mission Area. The Board also heard reports from each of the subcommittees and resolved several outstanding reports during the meeting.

TUESDAY, MAY 28, 2013

Steven Hamburg (acting chair) called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m. and reminded members that the October meeting of the Board had been cancelled due to the failure of Congress to pass a Farm Bill before the deadline on September 31, 2012 – at which point the Board lost its legislative authority and was forced to cease operations. A bill to temporarily extend the 2008 bill was included in the “Fiscal Cliff” package in December and signed by the President on January 2, 2012. This “hiatus” in the Board’s authority and operations has caused several problems that will be addressed during the current meeting. He exhorted the Board to exploit its diversity and to use its time efficiently – “the status quo cannot continue,” in U.S. agriculture or in the NAREE Board.

The Role of the Board Vis-à-Vis the Executive and Legislative Branches of Government

Catherine Woteki (Undersecretary for Research, Education and Economics (REE) and Chief Scientist, USDA) welcomed participants and explained that the first day’s business was to provide orientation and updates for new and returning members. There have been no changes to the Board’s purpose as a Federal Advisory Committee, or to the mandate for its subcommittees (Specialty Crops, Renewable Energy, Citrus Diseases, and Genetic Resources) and its report on the Relevance and Adequacy (of USDA research). However, there have been subtle changes in the Board’s bylaws and its relationship to USDA.

Mark Garrett (Deputy Assistant General Counsel, USDA) outlined changes in the general operating procedures (GOPs) under which the Board functions. The Federal Advisory Board Act ensures broad public participation in the development of policy and operations of government agencies. But while NAREEE also reports to the House and Senate agriculture committees, it is an *Executive Branch* advisory committee – it reports to the Secretary, and the Secretary reports to Congress and the public. Ultimately, the President controls the review and release of all Executive Branch reports, and the White House is interested in maintaining a “unified, consistent Executive voice.” These principles are reflected in Section 12 of the Board’s GOPs, which spell out the rules under which the Board’s reports and recommendations will be reviewed by REE and the Secretary prior to their release.

In response to questions, Garrett noted that members represent their constituencies on the Board, and are free to bring their constituencies’ concerns to the Board, but they are not to lobby Congress as members of the Board. In reporting back to their constituencies, they should observe the confidentiality of the Board’s deliberations (including draft recommendations) until such time as the minutes or reports are reviewed and released by the Secretary. The NAREEE Board is unique in its role as advisor not only to USDA but also to the land grant universities and the Congress, but it would nonetheless be inappropriate to circumvent review by the Secretary, especially on pending legislation. Most of these issues can be handled through good communications with the Executive Committee and the Secretary.

Andrew Tobin (Senior Specialist, USDA Office of Ethics) reported back to the Board on a “top-down” review of ethics conducted during the “hiatus,” with a view to standardizing the rules among USDA advisory committees. Board members should remember that they are “special

outside representatives,” not temporary government employees, and thus are not subject to many of the rules that would otherwise regulate conflicts of interest. However, they should also keep in mind the importance of appearances, recusing themselves from discussions in which there might be the perception of conflict.

Michelle Radice (acting Executive Secretary, NAREEE Board Office) reviewed specific changes in the Board’s GOPs with regard to its membership and reporting. These GOPs were last revised in October 1997. She noted that several positions have been removed from the Board, including those representing crop and animal commodities, scientific organizations not related to agriculture, and USDA agencies with no REE responsibilities. The heads of REE mission agencies remain as ex officio members of the Board. There have also been changes with regard to term limits, the authority of the Chair, and the authority of the Executive Secretary.

Reports from the Board and its standing committees will continue to be developed by consensus, but to respect minority rights they will henceforth contain statements of dissent when there is a major disagreement over substance that cannot be resolved by the members preparing the report. All reports from the Board and its subcommittees will go to the Executive Committee for a 14-day review prior to final approval by the Board. At that time they will go to REE for a 30-day review by the Undersecretary or Deputy Secretary prior to release. All reports should be considered “draft,” and thus confidential, until they have been review and approved by the Undersecretary.

In the discussion that followed, members were concerned with how to produce the most useful reports and how to ensure that their recommendations were heard. By a unanimous voice vote, they agreed that all deliberations by the Board and its committees would be subject to Chatham House Rules, under which the substance of the discussion is reported, but there would be no attribution to specific members. Members noted that mission agencies rather than the Secretary had responded to Board recommendations in the past, and that the new Farm Bill requires that the Secretary report back to the Board. This is in conflict with the new GOPs (p. 17 #4); Ms. Radice will seek clarification on this point, and in the meantime will provide Board members with copies of a 31-page commentary on the new Farm Bill as well as more detailed information on the new GOPs.

Members also discussed the desirability of having at least one member of the Board on each standing committee, if only as an observer or liaison, to provide that committee with a voice on the Board. The Citrus Diseases and Genetic Resources committees currently have no such Board member; Mark McLellan volunteered to take this role with the Citrus Diseases committee. Radice noted that the new GOPs allow the Chair to “serve or appoint” members to these committees; it was the sense of the Board that there should be at least one Board member on each standing committee. Members should advise the Chair if they wish to serve on a standing committee.

Board Organization and Programs

Steven Hamburg distributed a spreadsheet detailing the current status of mandated reports from the Board and its standing committees, noting that at present these reports seem to “fall out of the sky” and asking members to suggest ways of clarifying and organizing reports in the future. He also asked members to suggest organized ways in which they can bring forward new or controversial issues from their constituencies. At present the Board lacks a mechanism for identifying and prioritizing the topics it should address, and the informational format of its past meetings has not been conducive to serious discussions. Hamburg asked that each Board member submit two or three issues of concern to the Executive Committee, which will collate the resulting list and identify priorities for future meetings. He asked all members to join the monthly Executive Committee teleconference, which provides a good occasion for developing priorities and setting agendas, allowing members to come to meetings ready for discussion. In a related matter, he suggested that in the future the agenda for Board meetings contain no more than 50 percent *presentations*, and at least 50 percent *discussions*.

Two members, Steven Hamburg and Milo Shult, were nominated for Chair. Each was given five minutes to address the Board.

There being no public comment, the Board recessed at 5:45.

WEDNESDAY, MAY 29, 2013

Board Business

Michelle Radice called the meeting to order at 8:00 a.m. and reported that the election of a new Chair had resulted in a tie – Steven Hamburg and Milo Shult had received the same number of votes. There being no precedent or provision for this outcome, the two candidates agreed to serve as co-chairs for the balance of the current term. As a result, there were no nominations for Vice Chair. Radice reminded members to make their nominations for the Executive Committee prior to lunch.

A Vision for the NAREEE Board

Catherine Woteki asked the Board to compare two sets of strategic goals, both of which represent lists of the kind of topics on which REE would welcome the Board’s advice and input. The first set comes from the REE Action Plan for USDA Science, prepared in response to the 2008 Farm Bill and due for release in mid-June 2013:

- Local and global food supply and security;
- Responding to climate and energy needs;
- Sustainable use of natural resources;
- Nutrition and childhood obesity;
- Food safety;
- Education and science literacy; and
- Rural prosperity/urban-rural interdependence.

By comparison, a recent report of the President's Council of Advisors for Science and Technology (PCAST)¹ proposed a somewhat different list of "challenges" for agricultural research:

- Managing new pests, pathogens and invasive plants;
- Increasing the efficiency of water use;
- Reducing the environmental footprint of agriculture;
- Growing food in a changing climate;
- Managing the production of bioenergy;
- Producing safe and nutritious food; and
- Assisting with global food security and maintaining abundant yields.

PCAST also offered six specific recommendations for USDA:

1. Focus research funding on competitive grants, especially for basic science relevant to agriculture;
2. Expand competitive fellowship programs;
3. Expand competitive awards programs for new infrastructure investments in agricultural research;
4. Establish six research institutes, to be funded at \$25 million/year;
5. Conduct an internal review of Federal regulatory policy and technology transfer; and
6. Establish a scientific advisory committee to advise USDA on the implementation of these recommendations.

Woteki said that USDA will need the Board's advice on all of these issues, as well as the new issue of how to decrease the large public investment in major crops. Some of these topics can be carved out and addressed through small studies, perhaps with analytic support from REE mission areas. Others – notably #4 and #6 – might require a more formal approach, perhaps the creation of new standing committees of the Board. In the short term, she would be grateful for the Board's advice on three topics:

1. How to establish the six proposed research institutes;
2. How to change the balance of public investment in major crops; and
3. How (and where) to establish the proposed scientific advisory committee on implementation of PCAST recommendations.

In the discussion that followed, Board members noted that infrastructure needs are particularly pressing, since ARS has existing infrastructure to maintain as well as requests for new infrastructure. However, most of their questions had to do with the proposed research centers – where in USDA and the budget would they be located; could they be created with a clear "exit plan" once their purpose is achieved; could they be aligned so as to address the REE or PCAST goals; has there been a serious analysis of the visibility of the budget numbers involved? They noted that such centers could be focused on the work of integration or synthesis, for example in the area of adaptation to climate change. There may not be an existing model for these centers, at NSF or indeed anywhere in the federal system. Several members urged that these centers be embedded in the Office of the Chief Scientist, perhaps as virtual centers with clear time limits,

¹ "Report to the President on Agricultural Preparedness & the Agriculture Research Enterprise," 7 Dec 2012.

rather than new bricks and mortar under NIFA as currently suggested. Woteki said that she would pursue these questions with the USDA General Counsel as well as the Secretary.

The Board agreed to address three of the suggested topics:

1. The Co-chairs would form an ad hoc committee to address the process and alignment of the six proposed research centers, to report back to the Board at its September meeting.
2. The Board would make public support for major crops the topic of a focus session during that same meeting in September.
3. The Board would consider immediately the process and membership of the proposed scientific advisory committee.

On the latter topic, the Board agreed by unanimous voice vote to form a scientific advisory panel as a committee of the NAREEE Advisory Board. Members asked if the proposed board might include ARS scientists, who possess the requisite depth and breadth of expertise; it will be necessary to clear this with the General Counsel with regard to conflict of interest. Members of the National Academy would also have the necessary “high-level gravitas.” Membership should also include behavioral scientists (for example, in nutrition and obesity), as well as a generous sprinkling on non-Ph.Ds. Board members suggested that a committee of six to ten members would be small enough to be relatively nimble; at least one of those members should also be a member of the NAREEE Advisory Board, and the Executive Director can designate a nonvoting alternate to observe and take notes.

For the focus session on major crops, members agreed to canvass their constituencies to identify issues, views and potential speakers. Certainly there are pertinent ERS studies that could be studied in advance. It will be important to define clearly the terms “major” and “crops” (plants only, or livestock as well?). Members should feed ideas and names (as well as information requirements) to the Executive Director, who will distribute preliminary materials well in advance of the September meeting. The Co-chairs called on Board members to volunteer to help plan and organize the focus session.

Updates from Mission Agencies

Cynthia Clark (Administrator, National Agricultural Statistics Service) reported that NASS continues to refine its operations in response to budget cuts and changes in USDA’s data needs. The agency seeks to achieve cost savings by improving the quality and relevance of its products. In some cases, this means reducing the frequency of reporting or even dropping marginal reports, in order to preserve its core activities. A report on this transformation, due in February 2014, will include the creation of a national operations center supported by a smaller network of 12 regional offices rather than the current 46; data collection by phone and PC rather than personal surveys; and the creation of a methodology division to advise on further refinements.

In response to questions, Clark added that the current response rate for the Census of Agriculture, at 5 to 10 percent, is unacceptably low. NASS is active in government-wide efforts to improve data quality, but it is less active on the topic of open data and public access. Privacy is not yet a concern, since raw data is not handed over the National Archives until 72 years have passed. ERS may get the data sooner, for research purposes, but both ERS and NASS observe

the appropriate guidelines for de-identifying statistics to preserve privacy at the individual or establishment level.

Mary Bohman (Administrator, Economic Research Service) reported that ERS has experienced budget cuts totaling 13.6 percent over 4 years. This has led to reductions in staff, mostly through retirements and buyouts, as well as changes in operations. ERS has developed new metrics for the impact of its reports, in order to learn how its clients *use* its products, in order to maintain the breadth and depth of research that have been the hallmarks of ERS reports in the past. In the process, the agency has made new investments in outreach and IT, as well as new collaboration with academics, while reducing the level of extramural research it supports.

In response to questions, Bohman said that qualitative research has not been a strength of ERS, which typically partners with university researchers to address such topics. ERS has convened workshops on statistical approaches to emerging issues of current concern such as veterans' affairs, child health, and the meat trade. ERS is also experimenting with the use of social media to supplement its web presence, and it is paying new attention to new techniques for mapping the influence of social networks in disseminating information. Stakeholders include executive agencies and congressional staff, as well as NGOs, nonprofits and state government, but Bohman admits that ERS doesn't know who all of their users are.

Sonny Ramaswamy (Director, National Institutes of Food and Agriculture) reported that NIFA has undergone several changes in leadership since it was organized in 2010, and repeated budget cuts have prevented the agency from filling many staff positions. Many of its investments have been in the form of Coordinated Agricultural Project (CAP) grants and continuation grants of up to \$40 million, usually to teams of researchers and institutions, addressing a wide range of scientific and social challenges. About 50 percent of these grants are related to production agriculture. The National Academy has announced a plan to review AFRI in 2014, looking at whether this competitive grant program has an appropriate scale and focus of activity.

In response to questions, Ramaswamy added that a NIFA strategic plan would soon be in final draft. NIFA achieves a leverage of 5-to-1 in funds from other agencies and private sources. The Department of Education has announced an "Agriculture in the Classroom" program that will reach an estimated 100 million children. Ramaswamy recommended a "portfolio approach" to research centers of the sort proposed by PCAST, combining both large and small institutes, with both long and short life spans. Organizationally, NIFA consists of four "distributed" institutes and a central directorate, a structure that has given NIFA considerable experience with regional collaborations. Water and air quality are large and important issues that are ripe for study and action through these research centers; a unifying topic would be reactive nitrogen species, a topic of concern to public health as well as agriculture

Edward Knippling (Administrator, Agricultural Research Service) reported that, in addition to its vast intramural research enterprise, ARS also supports an extensive network of research and infrastructure that requires \$150 million/year for repairs and maintenance. In addition, demand is growing for new research facilities like the Poultry Disease Center in Athens GA. He believes that the research centers proposed by PCAST should be "focuses of activity," rather than bricks

and mortar, and that particular care should be taken to complement, not duplicate, existing initiatives and facilities.

Simon Liu (Director, National Agricultural Library) reported that NAL seeks to position itself to exploit the “data tsunami” flowing from 2 billion sensors and sources. Agricultural data is generated and managed locally; making it dispersed, heterogeneous and hard to access. “Open government” initiatives have made “open and machine-readable data” the default format for government information, and OSTP has required USDA to publish an open access plan by August 2013. NAL plans to reorganize itself in order to collect, organize and analyze a huge range of literature, including 10,000 articles per year by ARS scientists, 10,000 more from other USDA sources, and a far larger number from 1,600 journals and 400 publishers. Data dissemination will include not only agricultural researchers but also industry and the public.

In response to questions, Liu explained that NAL is part of an intergovernmental committee that meets at the White House to iron out wrinkles in the open government fabric. The working group on scholarly publications has made notable process, the working group on data management not so much. An important model is PubMed from the Library of Medicine at NIH, which already manages over 120,000 scientific articles per year. Keywords, pattern recognition and data mining have made important contributions, but interoperability remains a barrier, as does human capital – recent studies suggest that there may be 450,000 data management openings in the near future, far outstripping current supply. Perhaps artificial intelligence will make contributions in the future.

International Programs with Relevancy to the REE Mission Area

Jaime Adams (Senior Advisor for International Affairs, REE) said that REE has international programs because both science and agriculture are international. REE collaborates in global research through several institutional platforms, with an emphasis on food security, open data and science-informed policymaking. In addition, the Chief Scientist is the lead official for U.S. participation in international agricultural science, and Undersecretary Woteki is travelling to China in the week after the present meeting. This past year, when the United States chaired the Group of Eight, there was a special focus on food security; this year, with the United Kingdom chairing the meeting, there will be greater emphasis on open data; and next year, with Australia as the chair, there will be special emphasis on using science to influence policy. Most industrial democracies seem to agree that, if the taxpayers paid for the data, they should have access to it.

Cheryl Christensen (Market and Trade Economics Division, ERS) said that her agency’s international collaborations have a special focus on food security and on sub-Saharan Africa. ERS tries to ensure that there is a constituency for better data by developing more useful measures of food security, for example through better surveys and through analysis of the four constituents of food security: availability, access, utilization, and stability.

Mark Miller (Director, International Programs Office, NASS) reported on NASS activities in capacity development, which are designed to strengthen both the ability to generate statistics and the local demand for market information in foreign countries. Often this involves NASS

expertise funded by other government agencies, such as USAID. Other efforts are designed to build systems that will support rational decisionmaking.

Ibrahim Shaqir (Director, Office of International Research Programs, and ARS) said that the three priorities of ARS international efforts are food security, biosecurity and international partnering. ARS conducts research in many foreign locations, for example to identify the natural predators of invasive pests, but also to encourage foreign scientists (for example, in the former Soviet Union) to pursue beneficial research on animal diseases rather than biological weapons. ARS supports a visiting scientist program that brings foreign researchers to U.S. laboratories to study scientific issues of common concern.

Hiram Larew (Division Director for the Center for International Programs, NIFA) described several international initiatives by NIFA. In order to promote international competence in U.S. professionals, for example, the AFRI grant application requires a foreign partnership that benefits U.S. agriculture. NIFA is also working with USAID and land grant universities to transfer e-Extension to other countries, as well as to multicultural clients at home. NIFA has been surprised by the enthusiasm of other nations to adopt the Extension model of listening to their clients and responding with objective advice. This can be especially valuable in areas such as youth development, nutritional education, disaster assistance, and conflict resolution.

In response to questions, these agency representatives agreed that research (like knowledge) is a globalizing influence. USDA can help the process along by providing information to be distributed by USAID and by showing foreign officials how to improve the quality and relevance of agricultural data. However, foreign data remains stubbornly opaque, and international trade negotiations are notoriously “closed” – it can be very difficult to circulate data or summarize negotiations. Better models of regulatory barriers would be especially useful. Data exchanges with China are particularly difficult, despite ten years of talks; it remains a good idea to study and understand how China perceives U.S. markets and consumers.

Board Business

With nine Board members having been nominated for the Executive Committee, members were reminded to vote for seven candidates not later than 7 a.m. the following morning.

There being no public comment, the meeting recessed at 6:00.

THURSDAY, MAY 30, 2013

Board Business

Steven Hamburg called the meeting to order at 8:00 a.m. and announced the membership of the Executive Committee for the next year:

- Charles Boyer
- Carrie Castille
- Steven Daley-Laursen
- Leo Holt

- Mark McLellan
- Agnes Mojica
- Robert Taylor

Committee Reports

Hamburg noted that the Board's hiatus has also disrupted the work of its standing committees. Only the Genetic Resources Committee held a meeting in past six months, and none of the chairs have been formally confirmed, something that is supposed happen annually.

Carrie Castille reported that the latest *Adequacy and Relevance* report was written and reviewed before the hiatus, but it is unclear whether it has been vetted by the full Board. The minutes of the 1 March Executive Committee meeting say that "R&A needs clearance" and the latest draft was sent to the full board on 19 March with an 8 April deadline for comments. Five additional comments were received, four of which have been resolved. Castille and co-chair Steve Daley-Laurson met with the author of the final comment during a break and presented a revised draft that resolved his objections, at which time the Board (acting as a committee of the whole) approved the draft, subject to modification, by a unanimous voice vote with one abstention.

Carol Keiser-Long reported that the *Renewable Energy* report has also gotten stuck in review. The draft report was sent to the entire Board and no comments were received. Hamburg signed a lightly edited letter of conveyance on 13 April, but apparently the draft has not gone forward. The sense of the Board was that this report should be sent to the Secretary as soon as possible. The committee recommends continued strategic investment in renewable energy, with greater attention to sustainability and affordability.

Mary Wagner reported that the minutes of the *Specialty Crops Committee* indicate that a draft report has been sent to the Executive Committee, but that draft cannot be located. The Board decided to table this item pending retrieval of the report and/or the next meeting of Specialty Crops; the matter will be an agenda item for the Executive Committee teleconference in June.

Herman Warren reported that the *National Genetic Resources Advisory Committee* met on 5-6 March for the first time since 1999. Its nine members address issues of capacity and demand for genetic resources and how to satisfy them in an era of declining budgets and increasing costs. International resources and exchanges are a particular focus. The panel began with a list of 30 or 40 pressing issues, which they have narrowed to 14 priorities. Charles Boyer (the Board's liaison to the advisory panel) noted that the panel has a huge mandate: collection, preservation and distribution of animal, plant and microbial resources. Domestic infrastructure is at or near capacity and needs to be expanded; land grant universities have their own capacity, which needs to be integrated with federal infrastructure. The panel plans to write a white paper with recommendations to the NAREEE Advisory Board.

Tom Jenkins reported that the Citrus Disease R&D Advisory Committee had held two listening sessions, in Florida and California, but their draft status report was incomplete when the Board went into hiatus. The advisory committee needs to be reorganized and resuscitated. In response to questions, he added that the vector for greening disease has been identified – an Asian citrus psyllid (*Diaphorinia citri*) that transmits the bacteria that cause the disease. This insect vector

has already spread from Florida to California and Texas. GMO citrus in Arizona appear to be resistant to citrus greening, and NIFA has given the Citrus R&D Foundation a large grant to develop new psyllid strains that will not transmit the disease. However, citrus greening disease may be a model for most crops in the future – whatever threats exists in the world will eventually come to the United States – and thus an opportunity to present the threat as a national issue.

With regard to the proposed Scientific Advisory Panel, members offered the following suggestions:

- Members should be rock-solid scientists with depth, rather than breadth, of expertise, but they must also be capable of strategic thinking and long-range “horizon scanning;”
- Members should be enthusiastic, as well as eminent;
- Their backgrounds should correspond, roughly, to the seven PCAST “challenge” questions;
- Members should have interests relevant to farmers and ranchers, but there should be at least one “non-agriculture” member, and their perspectives should span the continuum from basic and applied research to “translation science” and real-world applications.

Future Activities

Members suggested that Charles Boyer, Robert Taylor, Nancy Cox, and Mark McLellan serve on the ad hoc committee to formulate recommendations on the Scientific Advisory Panel. Members also asked that Board staff distribute copies of the full PCAST report and invite a speaker from PCAST to appear at the September meeting. Hamburg invited interested members to join in the Executive Committee teleconference on 7 June (and the first Friday of subsequent months) at 11:00 a.m. EDT; Board staff will make arrangements.

David Kelly (Executive Director-designate) promised that staff would distribute agency presentations and other background materials in advance of meetings, using the Board website or some other format such as GoogleDocs. Instead of briefing books, members will henceforth be provided with memory sticks containing relevant meeting materials.

In a freewheeling discussion, members agreed that listening to presentations is a waste of time; if anything, the Board should lead the mission agencies rather than the other way around. Time during face-to-face meetings should be used for Board business and discussion among members, including the kind of “horizon-scanning” that seldom gets a hearing at present. This means that members will be responsible for “pre- meeting homework” in the form of background reading and gathering input from their constituencies; a preparatory webcast might also be useful. USDA is still hearing from a limited field of stakeholders and constituencies; the NAREEE Advisory Board needs to bring the department input that is *different* from its other 180 advisory committees and different from the national organizations that already lobby for their own narrow interests. Members expressed the hope that future meetings will include more conversations with Woteki, more conversations among the members, and more back-and-forth on Board recommendations. An example is the issue of partnership: the Board held a focus session on research partnerships and made specific recommendations, to which REE has yet to reply. In the present budget climate, there should be no disciplinary or jurisdictional silos or barriers on

research funding. These ideas should mesh well with Woteki's personal emphasis on integration and collaboration, and they certainly deserve more discussion.

Hamburg urged members to canvass their constituencies on this and other potential topics for future meetings and to submit their ideas to the Executive Committee. He also urged members to identify committees and working groups on which they wished to serve or observe. Several members urged that REE prepare an "emergency plan" for the Board and its initiative, in the event of another "hiatus" on 1 October 2013.

In her closing remarks, Woteki thanked members and staff for their hard work and acknowledged that there was a lot of hard work ahead. She feels that the Board is up to this agenda, however, and she promise to put a mechanism in place that would ensure a response and action by REE in answer to the Board's recommendations and reports.

There being no public comment, Hamburg adjourned the meeting at 12:00 noon.

RESOLUTIONS

- In the interests of encouraging open and frank discussion, the Board agreed to operate under the Chatham House Rule in preparing minutes of meetings of Board and its committees and working groups. Under this Rule, "participants are free to use the information received, but neither the identity nor the affiliation of the speaker(s), nor that of any other participant, may be revealed," unless the speaker insists on such attribution. See <http://www.chathamhouse.org/about-us/chathamhouserule> for further details.
- The Board called on the Secretary of Agriculture to respond to all Board reports and recommendations, including minority reports, as required under the new Farm Bill.
- The election of a new Board chair resulted in a tie. There being no rule or precedent for this outcome, the Board agreed that Steven Hamburg and Milo Shult should serve as co-chairs for the coming year, taking turns in presiding at meetings etc., with no Vice Chair during that period.
- There being no assurance that the Board will not find itself once again "on hiatus" after October 1, the Board agreed to hold its next meeting in September 2013.
- The Board agreed to form an ad hoc subcommittee to consider the process of implementation of the PCAST recommendation to establish six "institutes" in USDA (as recommended in a recent PCAST report). This subcommittee will report back to the Board in September.
- The Board agreed to hold a focus session in September on the topic of how to reduce public investment in major "program" crops.
- The Board agreed to create the scientific advisory committee (also recommended by PCAST) as a new committee of the Board, with at least one Board member as a member

of the new committee and the Executive Director to designate a nonvoting alternate to take notes when the official member is unavailable.

- The Board elected the following seven members to serve on the Executive Committee during the coming year: Charles Boyer, Carrie Castille, Steven Daley-Laursen, Leo Holt, Mark McLellan, Agnes Mojica, and Robert Taylor.
- The Board agreed to send forward the Renewable Energy report, which was caught in the “hiatus,” with changes by (then) Vice Chair Hamburg and a new letter of conveyance.
- The Board agreed (with one abstention) to send forward the Relevance and Adequacy report, similarly caught in the “hiatus,” contingent on modifications to satisfy the objections of one committee member. Those objections being addressed, the Board later agreed without objection to send the report forward.
- The Board tabled consideration of the Specialty Crops report, pending discussion during the Executive Committee teleconference on June 7.

ACTION ITEMS

- The acting Executive Director (Michelle Radice) will provide Board members with copies of the 31-page USDA commentary on the new Farm Bill.
- The acting Executive Director will provide Board members with copies of her PowerPoint presentation on the new General Board Procedures.
- The spreadsheet for tracking the status of Board reports will be modified by adding a column for “Response by Secretary.”
- Board members were given a “homework” assignment to identify the top one or two issues (in the eyes of their constituencies) for consideration by the Board. These issues should be sent to the Executive Committee, which will collate and prioritize them for focus sessions at future meetings.
- In planning the agenda for future meetings, no more than 50 percent of time should be devoted to presentations from USDA personnel; and at least 50 percent should be reserved for discussion and deliberation by the Board.
- The Undersecretary for REE will consult with the General Counsel on the pros and cons of establishing the six PCAST “institutes” under the Office of Chief Scientist, rather than under NIFA.
- Members will canvass their constituencies for issues and potential speakers for the focus session on program crops at the September meeting. They will also inform the Executive Director of information requirements and potential reports from mission areas (e.g.,

definitions of “major,” “program,” “crop;” relevant ERS reports). Hamburg will invite Dan Schrag and Barbara Schaal, who chaired the PCAST report, to speak to the Board.

- Staff will send pertinent information and documents to Board members further in advance of Board meetings, rather than waiting to put them in the briefing book.